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T H R E E
S E R M O N S;

Of forms of prayer, and particularly
those of the church of *England*;

Pharisaism and Popery parallel'd;

On the Fast-day 1745, before the
Honourable House of Commons.

By *THOMAS NEWTON*, D. D.

Rector of *St. Mary-le-Bow*.

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SEERMONS

Of John of power, and particularly
that of the church of England

Printed and Paper published

On the 1st of 1742, before the
House of Commons



By THOMAS WATSON

Printed and Paper published

By the same Author

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*Of forms of prayer and particularly those
of the Church of England,*

A

S E R M O N

Preach'd in the

Parish Church of *St. Mary-le-Bow,*

According to the last-will of Mr. *John
Hutchins* Citizen and Goldsmith,

On *St. Mark's day,* 1745.

*When there was a collection for the
Charity Children.*

A 2

Of form of prayer and pastoral care
of the Church of England

S E R M O N

Preached in the

Parish Church of St. Mary in Bury

on the Sunday after the Ascension
the 10th of June 1744

By the Rev. Mr. John Smith

Minister of the said Church

T O
Mr. Samuel Sandeforth,
T R E A S U R E R,

<i>Mr. Thomas Leach,</i>	<i>Mr. William Caldwell,</i>
<i>Mr. Thomas Paris,</i>	<i>Mr. James Dobson,</i>
<i>Mr. John Drinkwater,</i>	<i>Mr. Henry Oldham,</i>
<i>Mr. Thomas Brunskell,</i>	<i>Mr. Thomas Cbeffon,</i>
<i>Mr. John Whiting,</i>	<i>Mr. Gabriel Sleath,</i>
<i>Mr. Henry Clarke,</i>	<i>Mr. John Blackall,</i>
<i>Mr. Soper Hayter,</i>	<i>Mr. Michael Martindale,</i>
<i>Mr. Leonard Pead,</i>	

Citizens and Trustees of *Mr. Hutchins's* Charity.

G E N T L E M E N,

WHEN I had preached this sermon at Your desire, You were very importunate with me to publish it. I defer'd it, in hopes that You would think better of it; but upon Your continued application it is given up to You; and I wish only, that it may prove as satisfactory to the Readers, as You said

it was to You and the rest of the Hearers.

Let me now in my turn request of You, to shew Your zeal and affection for the church of *England*, now especially in these times of danger and trouble, by a constant and devout attendance upon its worship and service. Other means are to be employ'd in our defence besides religion, but without religion all other means will be ineffectual. They, who best discharge their duty to God, will best fulfill their other obligations of loyalty to their King, and love to their Country. And in this confidence of You I am,

GENTLEMEN,

Your most faithful

and obedient Servant,

Thomas Newton.

LUKE XL I.

*—Lord teach us to pray, as John
also taught his disciples.*

P RAYER is a duty necessarily arising from the relation of man to God; and public prayer is as much our duty, as we are members of society, as private prayer is our duty, as we are individual and single persons. That we should therefore pray unto God, all who have any sense of religion are agreed; but they differ greatly as to the matter and manner of their petitions. There is an excellent dialogue in * Plato between Socrates and Alcibiades, wherein is shewn the great difficulty of framing our peti-

* Alcibiades secundus sive De precatatione.

tions so, as they may prove acceptable to God and beneficial to ourselves; and Socrates, sensible of the defects of natural reason, infers from thence the necessity of divine revelation, and expresses his hopes and expectations, that some divine person would be sent from heaven to teach and instruct us as in other parts of our duty, so particularly in the exercise of our devotions. The disciples of our Lord were conscious of the same wants and infirmities; and therefore they apply themselves to him, that he would *teach them to pray as John also taught his disciples*. Our Saviour teaches them accordingly; and in them hath taught us not only the true object of worship but also the best method of worshipping him, not only what petitions we are to offer at the throne of grace but also the form and manner wherein we are to offer them. And yet there
are

are men, who pretend to be so much wiser than the rest of mankind, as to want none of these assistances and instructions; they are for pouring out their spirit in extemporary prayer, and utterly condemn all set forms: And even of those, who may approve set forms of prayer, some may yet disapprove the forms prescribed in our liturgy, and imagin that others more convenient and proper may be substituted in their place. For our own vindication and satisfaction therefore in points of such importance we will first attempt to prove *the lawfulness and expediency of set forms of prayer in general*, and secondly endeavor to shew *the excellency of our own form in particular*; if not to convince our adversaries, yet at least to justify ourselves in the use of it.

First

First we are to prove *the lawfulness and expediency of set forms of prayer in general*. And for the sake of brevity as much as of order, our proofs shall be reduced to two kinds, and shall be drawn partly from the *authority of scripture* and partly from the *reason of the thing*.

1. We have the *authority of scripture* plainly on our side, and what better authority can we desire? Are any of our modern sectarists wiser than Solomon? but he in his directions for our behaviour in the house of God, forbids all long extemporary prayers; *Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart be hasty to utter any thing before God, for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth; therefore let thy words be few.* And much to the same purpose the son of Sirach exhorts us; *Before thou prayest, prepare thyself, and be not as one that tempteth the Lord.* In the law of Moses the form is prescribed, wherein the

Eccles. v.
2.

Eccles.
xviii. 23.

the priests should bless the people. As the people stood in need always of the same blessing, so was it to be implored always in the same words; *The Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee, the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace;* which very form of blessing we still retain in the communion-office, and in the order for the visitation of the sick. In like manner the form of blessing at the removing and resting of the ark, the form of prayer for the expiation of an uncertain murder, the form of confession and prayer of him who offereth the basket of first-fruits and of him who giveth his third year's tithes are all prescribed and appointed in the law; and would such forms have been appointed, if all forms were unlawful? But we need not insist upon single proofs, when we can produce a whole book together.

Numb. vi.
24, &c.

Numb. x.
35, 36.

Deut. xxi.
7, 8, 9.

Deu. xxvi.
3, &c.

ther. For was not the book of psalms composed for the service of the temple? And is not this evident from the titles and inscriptions of most of the psalms themselves? And can you suppose that the *man after God's own heart* was ignorant of the true manner of worshipping him? Nay not only that David, but the whole Jewish church were in an error from the beginning to the end? But you may conceive that this imperfect way of worship was proper only for that imperfect dispensation of the Jews; you may imagin that it favours altogether of their *beggarly elements*, and there should be no such restraint and imposition upon the spirit of Christians. But how then cometh it to pass, that John the Baptist delivers a form of prayer to his disciples, as the Jewish masters and doctors had also done before him to their disciples? And why is our Saviour so far from reprehending,
that

that he follows his example? Would our Saviour have given a set form of prayer to his disciples, if a set form had been any stinting of devotion? Or rather would he have done it, unless it had been an help to devotion? And much more would he have repeated and recommended the same form *twice*, at different times and upon different occasions? As Joseph said unto Pharaoh, *The dream* Gen. xli. *was doubled because the thing is established by God*; so may it be said in this case, the prayer was doubled, was repeated twice, that it might be established, and together with it the lawfulness and expediency of set forms of prayer might be evinced and established beyond all reasonable doubt and contradiction. Nor were there ever any christians, who questioned and opposed the use of set forms of prayer, till a century or two ago. The universal practice of the church from the earliest ages, which

which is the best interpreter of scripture, hath constantly favor'd it.

Nor secondly let it be pretended, that tho' scripture be for us yet reason is against us; for we have the *reason* of the *thing* on our side as plainly as the authority of scripture. A prescribed form of worship is not subject to the same inconveniences with extemporary effusions. The great danger of unpremeditated prayer is, lest it should degenerate into a rhapsody of absurdities and enthusiasm; and he must be an uncommon and powerful master indeed of thought and expression, who is able to speak on a sudden and yet speak nothing improper in an address to the majesty of heaven. A man should be ashamed of appearing with such indigested crudities before his earthly sovereign, or indeed before any person of understanding. But if there should be nothing absurd and unbecoming, yet the audience must

must first endeavor to understand the words; and then they must weigh and consider the sense and meaning; and then they must deliberate whether such requests are proper for persons in their condition, before they can lawfully join in them; and by that time the minister is passed on to some other subject, which requires the like attention and consideration; and so their curiosity may be raised, and they may exercise their judgment, but there can be scarce any room left for devotion. And as a precomposed form of prayer is not subject to the same inconveniences with extemporary effusions, so neither is it liable itself to any just objections. It is so far from obstructing or quenching our devotion as is pretended, that it rather assists and inflames it; the matter and the words are both prepared to our hands, we know before what is to follow that we may lawfully join in it, and no other

other attention is required but to raise our affections. And let me ask, is not the spirit of the congregation equally flinted whether the minister pray in an extemporary or in a composed regular form? And which is more fit and proper for the people to receive a form of prayer from the wisdom and authority of the whole church, or to depend upon the discretion of every single minister? But a precomposed form of prayer is not only liable to no just objection; but hath besides several advantages to recommend it. It is more for the honor of almighty God, expresses more reverence and devotion, preserves greater propriety and decency of language, and in short surpasses extemporary prayer, as much as sound piety and religion exceed the freaks and rants of fanaticism and enthusiasm. It is likewise more for the edification of men as well as for the honor of God; for who can
question,

question, which is likely to be most instructive and edifying, hasty conceptions, or studied compositions; the thoughts of one, perhaps illiterate, man thrown out without premeditation, or the wisdom of the church prepared and digested into form and order? It is better not only for the people, but for the ministers too; for as it prevents any vain ostentation of their talents in the more learned, so it supplies the more ignorant with what perhaps they could ill compose of themselves; for in every profession there are always some of inferior genius and capacity, and it is good for these to have such a provision made for them. Moreover it better establishes and secures the unity of faith and worship; hinders the heterodox from infusing their particular notions in their prayers, which is perhaps the most artful and plausible way of infusing them; reduces all the churches

B

to

to an uniformity, prevents any disagreement or contradiction in their petitions, and instructs them, as they worship the same God, to worship him with the same mind and voice. And finally it is shewing to all the world the terms of our communion, and giving them a fair opportunity to examin them before they join in it; whereas if there be no stated regular forms, we must have a sort of implicit faith in every minister, assent we know not why and pray for we know not what, just as his temper or interest or caprice or passions shall prompt and incite him. And this you may absurdly call praying by the spirit if you please, but every wise man will say with the Apostle, *I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also.*

1 Cor. xiv.
15.

'Tis easy to say more, but we hope that enough hath been said, to prove *the lawfulness and expediency*
of

of *set forms of prayer in general*, and we shall now, as it was proposed in the second place, endeavor to shew *the excellency of our own form in particular*. Not that a particular examination of all the beauties in our liturgy; or a particular answer to all the objections which have been made against it, can be proposed or expected in one of these discourses. These things have been done to satisfaction again and again by several learned men, and the books are in every one's hands. Our time will allow us only to make some general reflections.

1. It will very much recommend our liturgy to consider *how* and by *whom* it was composed, that it was not the production of this or that man, but the result of the wisdom of our governors both in church and state. The compilers of it were not only the best and wisest men of that age in this nation; but they con-

sulted likewise the most eminent of the divines abroad, and had their approbation of it, and approved it yet farther themselves by dying in it's defence. And since that time it hath received some corrections and improvements; and tho' no work of man can pretend to perfection, yet it hath perhaps as few imperfections as any whatever. In theory possibly it may seem easy to correct and amend it, but it hath been found and will be found extremely difficult in practise.

2. It is another recommendation of our liturgy, that it is drawn up in *our own mother-tongue*; so that we may all understand it with ease and attend to it with pleasure. In this respect as well as in others our church is truly primitive and apostolical; for when were prayers in an unknown tongue first introduced into the church, and what was the occasion of introducing them? Was it

it not because the Romans still retained their Latin service, after the Latin language was lost among them by the course of time and inundation of barbarous nations? It is true indeed that God understands our petitions in any language; and he understands as well the breathings of our hearts, if we pray in no language at all. The design of our prayers is not to inform Omniscience, but to acknowledge our own dependence; but how can they properly be said to be *our prayers*, if we do not join in them? And how can we be said to join in them, if we neither understand the sense nor the words? *If I know not the meaning of the voice I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me.* It is a happiness therefore that our service is such as all may join in it, because all understand it; and herein we particularly follow the

1 Cor. xiv.

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1 Cor. xiv.

11.

1 Cor. xiv. 26. precept of the Apostle, *Let all things be done to edifying.*

3. It recommends our liturgy yet more, that it was composed principally out of *scripture* or out of *antient liturgies* and *fathers*. There are not only several parts and passages borrowed intire, as particularly the Lord's prayer, and the psalms and lessons in their monthly and yearly course, and St. Ambrose's hymn called *Te Deum* and the prayer of St. Chrysostom, and the like: But even where intire parts and passages are not borrowed, and the very words of scripture or of fathers are not taken and applied, yet their spirit and manner, their style and character are still preserved; and perhaps there is scarce any collect in our liturgy, scarce any sentiment or expression that may not be justified by the authority of one or other of them. And what a comfort and satisfaction should it be to us, that
we

we are such a sound part of the holy catholic church, that we thus maintain the communion of saints, that we worship God in the same manner as the martyrs and confessors and best of christians did in the purest ages; and the spirit of their liturgies, like Elijah's upon Elisha, hath descended in *a double portion* upon 2 King. ii. 9. Ours.

4. It is a farther recommendation of it, that our prayers are addressed to the *proper object* thro' the *proper mediator*, to the *one God* thro' the *one mediator between God and men* 1 Tim. ii. *the man Christ Jesus*. Each collect ^{5.} begins with a solemn invocation of the one, and concludes with the prevailing merits and intercession of the other. And in this instance again our church is truly primitive and apostolical, and hath purged away the dregs of later times. For look into the Roman missals and manuals of devotion, and you will find as

many prayers directed to the Virgin Mary as to God himself, as many offered thro' the mediation of saints and angels, as of the Son of God himself. And yet it is certain, that nothing can be more contrary to the doctrine of scripture, or a greater deviation from the practise of the catholic church for more at least than three centuries after Christ. Let us congratulate ourselves therefore, that our worship is restored to it's genuin simplicity and purity. Rome Christian as well as Rome Pagan may have *Gods many and*

^{1 Cor. viii.}
6. *Lords many, but to us there is but one God the father of whom are all things and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ by whom are all things, and we by him.*

5. It is besides a great excellence of our service to have so *many short distinct* petitions, and renders them more fit and easy to be remember'd and repeated. Our liturgy in this respect

respect may be compared to a string of pearls, every one valuable but altogether almost inestimable. If the whole was disposed in one continued prayer, tho' it should not be tedious, yet it would keep our minds upon the stretch too long together; whereas these breaks and pauses give relief, our souls recover breath as it were, and we return to worship again with new spirit and vigor. Brevity is a beauty in all sorts of composition, and especially when man is addressing himself to God. Long prayers are too much like *preaching* to God Almighty. Sure we are that the Lord's prayer, which was design'd to be a standard and model for all others, is short as it is comprehensive; and you know not whether to admire it more for it's fulness or it's brevity.

6. The *variety* of our service is another excellence in the composition of it, and contributes much to the keeping up of our attention and devotion.

votion. A sameness in any thing soon fatiates and wearies us; and it is as difficult to keep the mind as it is the body, long in one posture. But by the beautiful intermixture of prayer and praise, of supplication and thanksgiving, of confession and absolution, of hymns and creeds, of psalms and lessons, our weariness is relieved, our attention is renewed, and we are led on agreeably from one subject to another, and by means of the variety are scarcely sensible of the length of our service. The frame of our liturgy is somewhat like the frame of the world; 'tis order in variety, and tho' all the parts are different, yet the whole is consistent and regular.

7. What renders it yet more excellent is it's *comprehensiveness*, including all that we can want or desire. The exhortation of the Apostle
 1 Tim. ii. is religiously observed; and *supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving*
 1, 2. of

of thanks are made for all men, for kings and for all that are in authority. Indeed there is nothing that relates either to ourselves or others, nothing that concerns us either as men or members of society, nothing that conduces to our happiness in this world or the world to come, but is comprehended in some or other of the petitions. A form of prayer for general use could not well be made more particular; and it is easy, while the minister is reading it, with a sudden glance of thought to appropriate and apply any passages to ourselves and our own case. A great deal is expressed, but more is implied; and our devotions in our closets and in our families we cannot perhaps better express than in the words of our liturgy, it is so suited to all ranks and conditions, and adapted to all wants and occasions.

8. The congregation have particular reason to be pleased, as they have
have

have a *larger share* in our service than in any other whatever: and the minister and people mutually raise and inflame each other's devotion. In the church of Rome the congregation are so far from having any share in the service, that they do no so much as understand it; but the priest mutters over his Latin prayers to himself, and the people every one their particular prayers to themselves; and so they depart some sooner and some later, just as they happen to have finish'd their devotions. And among our protestant dissenters there is commonly one long-winded tedious extemporary prayer; the people are only hearers, and they must hear before they can understand, and they must understand before they can approve, and they must approve before they can join in any petition, all which is impossible to be done in an instant while one is speaking. It is a singular privilege therefore, that
our

our people enjoy, of bearing so large a part in our service; and it is this that properly denominates ours, what really none else is, a book of *Common Prayer*.

In a word our liturgy is in every respect excellently contrived and fitted to promote true devotion. The language is so plain as to be level to the capacities of the meanest, and yet the sense so noble as to raise the conceptions of the greatest. And the *manner*, in which our service is performed, is worthy of the *matter*; our churches plain and solemn, neither painted and adorned like a theater on the one hand, nor yet intirely unadorned like a common room on the other; our vestments suitable and becoming, and the very emblem of holiness, for as St. John saith, *the fine linnen clean* Rev. xix. 8. *and white is the righteousness of saints*; our ceremonies neither too many nor too few, such as may excite and cherish and not such as may distract and dissi-

1 Cor. xiv.
40. dissipate our devotion. All things are done, as the Apostle would have them done, *decently and in order*; and if our piety is not eminent and conspicuous in proportion to our advantages, it is because we are wanting to ourselves, not because our church hath been wanting in making proper provision for us.

As we have therefore such an excellent form of prayer, let us reverence it accordingly; resort to it frequently; attend to it devoutly; accompany it not only with our lips but with our hearts; repeat what we are to repeat, and answer where we are to answer, but never inroach upon another's office, never repeat the absolution after the minister, never say our prayers aloud to disturb the rest of the congregation; join in every prayer with our mind, and in every amen with our voice, and in all respects behave like those who are in the more immediate presence of God;
and

and then will *the words of our mouths* Pfal. xix.
and the meditations of our hearts be ^{14.}
acceptable in thy sight, O Lord our
strength and our redeemer. And to
this duty methinks we should need
no other exhortation than that of the
Psalmist; and if we will not do it
for love let us do it for fear; O wor- Pfal. xcvi.
ship the Lord in the beauty of holiness, ^{9.}
fear before him all the earth.

But love is a more generous principle than fear: and how thankful ought we to be to our heavenly Father for having brought us up in the bosom of the best and purest church upon earth? and how can we be duly sensible of our own happiness without being desirous to communicate it to others? and what a pious and charitable work therefore is this of Yours in educating so many young children in the principles of the church of England, who might otherwise be made a prey to a false religion, or abandon'd to no religion?

Go

Go on then in the beneficent design that You have undertaken: it is a sort of godlike office, *out of the mouths of babes and sucklings to ordain strength, and perfect praise*: And every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver. And what christian can have the heart to refuse, when he remembers those memorable words of our Blessed Saviour? *Who so shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth me.* And again, *Verily I say unto You, In as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*

2 Cor. ix.
7.

Mat. xviii.
5.

—xxv.
40.

Pharisaism

Pharisaism and Popery parallel'd,

I N A

S E R M O N .

Preach'd in the

Parish Church of *St. Mary-le-Bow,*

And *Grosvenor Chapel,*

On occasion of the present Rebellion,
October 1745.

Publiſh'd at the particular request of ſeveral of
the audience.

C

Bartholomew and Robert parishes

IN A

SERMON

Preach'd in the

Parish Church of St. Mary-le-Bow,

And Carpenter Chapel,

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Published at the particular request of several of
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C

MAT. XXIII. 13.

*Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees,
hypocrites.*

ABUNDANCE of exhortations and reproofs there are in scripture, which tho' directed to particular persons, are yet of general use and importance. Even those passages, which seem to be more peculiarly adapted to certain persons and certain times, may yet afford instruction to all persons and all times. And of this kind particularly is our Saviour's discourse in the 23d chapter of St. Matthew, which tho' pointed directly at the Scribes and Pharisees, may yet serve for a perpetual warning against the vices of all those who shall tread in their steps. The Scribes were the great doctors and expounders of the Jewish

law; and because they were usually of the sect of the Pharisees, therefore the Scribes and Pharisees are so frequently joined together in scripture: And because *they did all their works to be seen of men*, because they *honor'd God with their lips while their hearts were far from him*, therefore our Saviour calleth them *hypocrites*. *Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites.* He observes that they *fit in Moses seat*, but then *they say and do not*: As persons in authority they might be obey'd, but as examples they were by no means to be follow'd. He denounces eight severe woes against them; and I wish among Christians there may not be some sitting *in cathedra* too, to whom these woes as properly appertain, as ever they did to the Scribes and Pharisees themselves. Let us take a view of them in the order, wherein they lie in the chapter, and see whether the vices of those times are
not

not to be parallel'd now. At least it will be of some use and service to point out the rocks and shelves upon which the Scribes and Pharisees made ^{1 Tim. i.} *shipwrack of faith and a good con-*^{19.} *science*, that so we may the more cautiously avoid them. For these things were written not for their sakes, but for our admonition upon whom the ^{1 Cor. x.} *ends of the world are come.*^{11.}

1. The first woe denounced against them is for their *shutting up the kingdom of heaven against men, neither* ^{ver. 13.} *going in themselves, nor suffering them that were entering to go in.* They shut up the kingdom of heaven against men, they did all they could to debar men from the true religion, neither embracing it themselves, nor suffering others, who would have embraced it, to embrace it. St. Luke expresseth it more particularly by their *taking away the key of know-* ^{Luke xi.} *ledge: they entered not in themselves,*^{52.} *and them that were entering in they*

hinder'd. We must understand, that at the admission of a Jewish doctor a book and a key were given him, importing that he should unlock and open, that he should interpret and explain the law of God to the people. It is in allusion to this ceremony, that our Saviour saith, that the Scribes and Pharisees had *taken away the key of knowledge*, that they had not duly opened and explained the law of God to the people, particularly with relation to the Messiah. They had corrupted the true and genuin sense of things by their false glosses and interpretations; and in numberless instances had *made the word of God of none effect by their traditions*. And now if there be any called Christians, who thus *take away the key of knowledge*, and *shut up the kingdom of heaven against men*, neither holding the truth themselves, nor permitting others, who would examin things, to examin them, who would profess the

Mar. vii.
13.

the truth, to profess it; will not this woe as properly belong to them, as ever it did to the Scribes and Pharisees? Every body, who heareth me, must immediately reflect upon the bishops and clergy of the church of Rome, whose practise this is, of not permitting their members, who would examin things, to examin them; a practise notorious to all, and denied by none. They not only perform their public prayers and the service of God in an unknown tongue; but will not even allow the people so much as to read the scripture without a license from their superiors, the bishops or inquisitors. And this license they grant as a particular favor, and never but at the recommendation of the priest or confessor, and when they are pretty secure of the person to whom they grant it. And then, when they allow the scripture to be read, they will allow it to be read only in their own

translations, and guarded and fenced with their own annotations. Here in England perhaps they may be a little more indulgent, where they are only upon sufferance, and have not their people in such subjection: But where their's is the establish'd religion, and they have the power in their hands, there whosoever presumes to read the scripture without leave is denied absolution, and in some countries it is well if he be not thrown into the prison of the Inquisition. It would make the people some amends for such a manifest abuse, if they instructed them in their duty by other means; but they have nothing of the body and substance of morality or divinity in their sermons and discourses: They *build* them (if I may thus apply a metaphor from St. Paul) with the *hay* and *strubble* of their legends and schoolmen, and not with the *silver* and *gold* of Moses and the Prophets or
of

1 Cor. iii.
12.

of Christ and his Apostles. They eclipse and extinguish as much as they can the light of scripture, and set up the *ignis fatuus* of tradition in it's stead. There is no need of arguments to expose such a practise. It is so contrary to all the principles of reason, so repugnant to the natural rights of mankind, so destructive of the very end and design for which the scripture was given, that the absurdity, the tyranny, the irreligion of it sufficiently expose themselves: And really one knoweth not which to wonder at most, the cruelty and arrogance of their clergy for acting in this manner, or the tameness and stupidity of their laity in suffering it.

2. The next woe denounced against the Scribes and Pharisees is for *devouring widows houses* and at the same time *for a pretence making long prayers*. They were very sanctified in appearance, but in reality they oppressed the widows and fatherless.

They

2 Tim. iii.
6.

Whitby.

They made their prayers of an intolerable length, and by these means imposed upon the credulity and superstition of *filly women*. A learned commentator says that they continued their prayers sometimes for three hours, and perhaps sold them as the Roman priests do their masses. Now it is certain the Roman priests are not only seemingly very religious and really very extortionate, but are extortionate by the means of religion, and make their prayers and masses the grand pretence for their exactions. One of the greatest funds of the church is the money they draw from disconsolate widows to pray the souls of their husbands and children out of purgatory. So literally true it is, that *they devour widows houses and for a pretence make long prayers; therefore they shall receive the greater damnation.*

3. The third woe denounced against the Scribes and Pharisees is for

for compassing sea and land to make^{ver. 15.} one profelyte, and when he is made making him two-fold more the child of hell than themselves. To illustrate this text commentators cite a passage out of * Justin Martyr, wherein he says, that the profelytes do not only not believe, but even two-fold more than you (speaking to the Jews) blaspheme the name of Jesus. And generally we may observe that the converts to any religion are greater zealots for it than those who were born and bred up in it, I suppose the better to shew the sincerity of their conversion, and to recommend themselves the more effectually to their new masters and companions. Now the diligence of the Roman priests and missionaries in compassing sea and land to make profelytes is not at all inferior to that of the Scribes and Pharisees. It is really

* Οἱ ὃ προσήλυτοι ἔ μόνον ἔ πιστεύουσι ἀλλὰ διτλόν-
 τερὸν ὑμῶν (Judæos alloquitur) βλασφημῶσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα
 αὐτοῦ Christi scilicet. Justin. apud Grotium. See Whitty
 100.

a distinguishing part of their character, and I wish the present times did not afford such melancholy proofs of it. But this we may say, it is owing to our weakness and not to their own strength, that they prevail. While we are asleep, they sow their tares. If we would but awake, we should find their best arguments no stronger than the green withs upon Sampson's hands; but while we lie sleeping in the lap of *Delilah*, in luxury and pleasure, they cut off our hair and deprive us of our strength. It is indeed among the poorer sort chiefly that they prevail by bribes, which they call charities. They do not so properly make converts, as purchase them: and as *Simon Magus* thought that the gift of God might be purchased with money; so they make merchandise and simony of souls, and buy them into their communion. 'Tis true this method doth little honor to them, but
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Judg. xvi.

Acts viii.
20.

it is the more dangerous to us, as it is in a manner *inlissing* men into their service; for every convert they make is not only the loss of a member to the church, but of a subject to the king, the new converts, as we observed, being commonly greater bigots, and *two-fold more the children of hell* than those who convert them.

4. The fourth woe denounced against the Scribes and Pharisees is for their vain distinctions of *oaths*, what were binding and what were not, when they were all alike obligatory. And will not this again put us in mind of the schoolmen and casuists of the church of Rome, so remarkable for splitting of hairs, and making of distinctions where there is no difference? They know how to dispense with the necessity of keeping faith with hereticks. They can instruct people how to take an oath without any intention of fulfilling it, or after they have taken it can in-

ver. 16,
&c.

Micah vi.
8.
Luk. xi.
4.
in the parallel place of Luke.

vent subterfuges and evasions, loosen the most solemn ties and engagements, discharge kings from their duty to their subjects, and absolve subjects from their allegiance to their king and country. They are the masters of the whole art of equivocations and mental reservations; and can exactly define and distinguish how a man may falsify without lying, and forswear himself without perjury. The *Scribes and Pharisees hypocrites* were nothing to them in these respects. The copy here infinitely surpasses the original.

ver. 23.

5. The fifth woe denounced against the Scribes and Pharisees is for *paying tithe of mint and anise and cummin*, for being superstitious and precise in the little rituals and ceremonials of religion, and at the same time *omitting the weightier matters of the law, judgment or justice, mercy or charity, and faith or trust in God, walking humbly with God* as it is in the prophet Micah, *the love of God* as it is in the parallel place of St. Luke.

Micah vi.
8.

Luke xi.
42.

Luke. And will not this denunciation affect all such christians, as are scrupulously observant of positive institutions, and at the same time negligent of moral duties? And will it not more particularly affect those christians, who are wonderfully exact in counting their beads and muttering over so many Ave Mary's; but make no scruple of fomenting rebellions, blowing up Parliaments, overturning kingdoms, and massacring a whole people? who would not for ever so much violate a vow of chastity by marriage, but are not so nice and tender in violating the same by fornication or adultery? who are very circumstantial in their forms and ceremonies, their crossings and gesticulations at the altar; but esteem it no manner of sacrilege to take away *the cup of blessing, and the communion of the blood of Christ* from the people? who will hardly and not without imposing severe penances absolve

olve a man from the least offence committed against their holy mother the church; but in other cases are as loose confessors, as in these they are strict and rigid, and provided a man be but a zealot for their religion and rich withal and bountiful to churches and monasteries, they have store of pardons and indulgences for him, and tho' he hath lived ever so profligate he may die in peace? Surely it may be said to such men with the greatest truth and justice,

ver. 24. *Ye blind guides, who strain at a gnat, but swallow a camel.*

6. The sixth woe denounced against the Scribes and Pharisees is for their making clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but being within full of extortion and excess, full of ravening and wickedness, as St. Luke expresseth it. The Pharisees were very superstitious and exact in their washings and purifications; The Pharisees wash oft, says St. Mark, bold-

ver. 25. *ing*

Luke xi. 39.

Mar. vii. 3, 4.

ing the tradition of the elders; and many other things there be which they have received to hold as the washing of cups and pots, brazen vessels and of tables. And are not the papists likewise very superstitious and exact in their washing and sprinkling of themselves and the things which belong to them with their holy water? It would be ridiculous even to recite the wonderful virtues, which they attribute to this holy water, and the many superstitious uses to which they apply it. They hardly ever go into or out of a church, but they are sprinkled with some of it. On solemn days the priest attends to perform that office, and at other times they serve themselves with it from a font placed near the church-door for that purpose, like one of our fonts for baptism. Thus do they like the Pharisees *make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter*; and whether they are not *within* too, like the Pharisees,

D

full

ver. 26.

full of extortion and excess, of ravening and wickedness, let their whole religion declare, which seemeth calculated for nothing else but to oppress the liberty and usurp the property of mankind. Well therefore might our Saviour say, and well may we say, Thou blind Pharisee, Thou blind Papist, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also; sprinkle thy heart with holy water; and let the thoughts of that be good, and the works of thy hands will be good also.

ver. 27.

7. The seventh woe denounced against the Scribes and Pharisees is for being *like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also, says our Saviour, outwardly appear righteous, unto men, but within are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.* In short they had a form
of

2 Tim. iii.
5.

of godliness, but denied the power thereof; and such there are among Christians as well as among the Jews. Particular men it is hard to judge; but it is certain no sect have more of the form and shew and pageantry of religion than the Romanists; and it is to be feared none have less of the power of it, as where there are most leaves, there commonly is least fruit. I wish it is not even literally true of their religious houses, considering the magnificence of the buildings, and what things are transacted within them; I say I wish it is not even literally true, that *they appear indeed beautiful outward, but are within full of all uncleanness.* It is the prerogative of God alone to know the hearts of men: but surely so many forms and ceremonies are enough to eat out the very life and substance of religion; and if all was pure and genuin, what need of so much paint and varnish? A plain neatness and

simplicity in dress and behaviour is the distinguishing characteristic of the *beauty of holiness* as well as of other beauty. It's greatest ornament is to want none.

ver. 29.
&c.

8. The last woe denounced against the Scribes and Pharisees is for their *honoring of dead saints*, at the same time when they *persecuted the living*. They *built the tombs of the prophets, and garnished the sepulchres of the righteous*, and at the same time *filled up the measure of their fathers, killing and crucifying some prophets and wise men, scourging and persecuting others from city to city*. But the papists far exceed them; for they not only *build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous*, but honor them with costly shrines and rich offerings, and make as many prayers and vows to them as to God, or the Son of God blessed for ever. Nor are they less uncharitable and cruel in persecuting the living,
than

than they are fond and superstitious in honoring the dead. We need not look abroad for instances; our own annals will furnish us with pages enow written, as I may say, in characters of blood. We need not go so far as the persecutions in Germany, or the massacre in France; the butcheries in the reign of Queen Mary, the powder-plot in the reign of King James the first, and the massacre of above 100,000 protestants in Ireland in the reign of his son, will stand as monuments of their cruelty, as long as ever the nation or history of England shall last. And if we should still connive at the growth of popery, and suffer their numbers to increase as they have done of late years, who can be our security, that the like bloody tragedies may not, and will not be acted again? They cannot indeed do what the Scribes and Pharisees did, *crucify the Lord of glory*; but they do

as much like it as they possibly can, they persecute him in his disciples and followers, those who adhere to his doctrine, those who tread in his steps. And we know very well, that the injuries done to his disciples our Saviour resents as done to himself. *I am Jesus whom thou persecutest*, said he to Paul when he persecuted the poor christians; and in another place (whether of acts of mercy or acts of cruelty it is the same) *Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren ye have done it unto me.*

Act. ix. 5.

Mat. xxv.
40, 45.

And thus, I think, it appears that every woe denounced against the Scribes and Pharisees is at least equally applicable, if not more applicable, to the priests and votaries of the church of Rome. Indeed it is almost impossible to read this account of the former, without thinking at the same time of the latter. The likeness is so very great, the resemblance

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is so very strong, that it striketh one immediately. Nor are these the only features, wherein they resemble one another. The Pharisees *fasted* Mat. ix. 14. according to St. Matthew; and do not the papists likewise keep frequent fasts and vigils? The Pharisees, as St. Luke and St. John inform Act. xxiv. 14. John. vii. 49. us, counted those, who differed from them, *heretics* and *accursed*: and do not the papists likewise call all those *heretics* who are of a different persuasion, and exclude all protestants from all hopes of salvation? The Pharisees were strenuous assertors of the privileges and immunities of the people of God; they were always for lessening the authority of the civil magistrate, and advancing their own; they even doubted whether it was *lawful to pay tribute unto Cæsar* Mat. xxii. 17. or not: and do not the popish clergy likewise plead their particular privileges and exemptions? have they not in all times endeavor'd to raise the power

ecclesiastical upon the ruins of the civil power? History abounds with examples in this kind: but fix upon the reign of our brave Henry the second, and see whether their renown'd Thomas Becket be not a saint and a martyr for the very same reasons, for which we should reckon him, and justly reckon him, a rebel to his king and a traitor to his country. The Pharisees suffer'd that part of the temple, which was a *house of prayer for all nations*, to be made *a den of thieves*: and is it not notorious, that the papists make their churches their sanctuaries, and sanctuaries for the vilest of robbers and murderers? We have traced the comparison no farther than we have the authority of scripture; farther we might trace it: but for my part I take no great pleasure in drawing the parallel; I am more sorry that they give the occasion.

Mar. xi.
17.

The

The true use and design of this discourse is not merely to expose their faults, but to expose them so as that we may avoid them; and that since the Papists and Pharisees are so like one another, we may take effectual care to be like neither. Our Saviour said to his disciples, *Except* Mat. v. 20. *your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.* And what then will He say to those Christians, who are so far from exceeding the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, that they even adopt their greatest vices and improve them?

And what a horrid and impious attempt then is this to impose popery upon us with a popish pretender, for a popish prince would soon make way for the popish religion, and the popish religion is attended with all these evils which you have heard, and many more! The protestant
 blunow religion

religion can be supported only by
 supporting the protestant succession;
 and if it should please God for our
 sins to punish us with a change—
 But do not Thou, O gracious Lord
 God, for the many and crying sins
 of this nation, deliver us over into
 the hands of our enemies, nor punish
 us according to our iniquities, but
 protect and prosper us after thy great
 mercy and goodness. ——— But if it
 should please God for our sins to
 punish us with a change, what a
 change would it be! a change from
 liberty to slavery, from the purest
 religion to the grossest idolatry and
 superstition, from a mighty kingdom
 to a province of France, from a
 flourishing church to a servile depen-
 dency upon the see of Rome, from
 the legal and mild government of a
 protestant king to the arbitrary ex-
 actions and heavy oppressions of a
 popish tyrant! Nor let any be de-
 luded with a vain notion, that he
 would

would be contented with the enjoyment of his religion, and leave us freely to exercise our own; even tho' he should make such a promise and declaration. They must be very willing to be deceived indeed, who can be deceived by such empty pretences. For it is the nature of that religion not to tolerate any other, but to endeavor to build and establish itself upon the ruins of all: and they will stop at nothing right or wrong for this purpose, the goodness of the end, as they think, will sanctify the most unrighteous means: and in fact there never was a popish prince, but he attempted to make his own the religion of his country, and has too often succeeded in the attempt, as Saxony, the Palatinate, and other countries once protestant, now oppress'd with popery, can testify. And for any promises and protestations which such a prince may be induced to

to make, we know very well that he may be dispensed with to make them, and dispensed with from keeping them; it is the profess'd doctrine of that church, that they are not obliged to keep faith with heretics, and especially when the good of their church requires otherwise, which is superior to all other obligations. And if we have not yet learned this from their doctrines, we may learn it from their practises, and the experience of former ages. When Queen Mary was first proclaimed, she engaged to the men of Suffolk who had been the principal instruments of her advancement to the throne, that *she would make no change or alteration in the state of religion*, and declared in council that *she would use no force in matters of religion, but leave every one to enjoy liberty of conscience*; and yet every child knoweth what cruelties were

were afterwards committed in her reign, how many excellent bishops and martyrs were burnt at the stake, how many others were imprison'd, fin'd, and tortur'd, or fled their country, and this flourishing island became a scene of desolation and a field of blood! And in like manner King James the second upon his accession declared in council (which declaration was printed and dispersed amongst the people) that *he would preserve the government in church and state as it was established by law; nay he would always take care to defend and support the church of England.* And what he said to his council, he repeated again in his speech to the Parliament, and in the very same words, *the better to evidence to You, says he, that I spoke them not by chance, and consequently that you may firmly rely upon a promise so solemnly made.* And yet how this
 promise

promise so solemnly made and his coronation oath were observed by him, no body need be told; all the world sufficiently knows and remembers. And can any of his *pretended descendants* give us stronger assurances than these? or are they more to be depended upon, and better to be trusted? they who have been bred up in the very bosom of Rome, and consequently are more bigotted and devoted to it, and under stronger obligations to promote it's interests: they who can never succeed here without the support and assistance of our inveterate and implacable enemies, and consequently if they succeed must establish the arbitrary government of France or Spain, as well as the corrupt and cruel religion of Rome! We may frame some judgment of their intentions and purposes by their adherents, who are nothing but a wicked

wicked crew of robbers and plunderers, or if of any religion Scotch and Irish papists. Every Englishman and protestant must abhor such an unnatural conspiracy and rebellion; the wisest and most moderate of the Papists themselves cannot approve it; it can be favor'd only by the most desperate bigots of that religion among ourselves, and foreign popish servants and others, of whom it is matter of loud and general complaint that there is so great a number in the nation, and those chiefly in the best and greatest families. God give us grace and wisdom that we *may see the things which belong unto our peace before they are hid from our eyes!* And surely you will not need any other admonition; it will be sufficient to admonish you in the words of St. Peter: *Ye therefore,* ^{2 Pet. iii. 17, 18.} *beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also being led away*

*away with the error of the wicked,
fall from your own steadfastness; but
grow in grace and in the knowledge
of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;
to Him be glory both now and for
ever. Amen.*

F I N I S.

A

S E R M O N

Preach'd before the Honourable

HOUSE of COMMONS

AT

St MARGARET'S WESTMINSTER

ON

Wednesday, December 18, 1745.

Being the Day appointed by His Majesty's
Royal Proclamation for a General Fast.

E

Mercurii, 18^o Die Decembris, 1745.

Ordered,

THAT the Thanks of this House be given
to the Reverend Dr. Newton, for the
Sermon by him this Day preached before this
House, at St. Margaret's Westminster; and
that he be desired to print the same; and that
the Lord Carpenter and Mr. Frankland do
acquaint him therewith.

N. HARDINGE,

Cl. Dom' Com'

R E V. ii. 5.

Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

IN the lesser Asia there were formerly seven famous and flourishing churches; but they began very early to degenerate, and several corruptions were grown up among them even in the days of the Apostles. St. John is therefore commanded to write unto them, and accordingly addresses the Revelation to them all in general, and a separate epistle to each in particular, and first to the church of Ephesus, as that was the

principal, and the metropolis of the lesser Asia. It is no ordinary message that he delivers, but he writes by the authority and in the name of Jesus, *Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, will visit thee speedily in judgment; and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, will take away from thee the light of the gospel which thou hast hitherto enjoy'd, except thou repent.* It may reasonably be presumed, that these admonitions had for some time at least the desired effect, in reforming the manners of men, and consequently in retarding the judgments of God: but after five or six centuries, when the Christians of the East walked no longer worthy of their holy profession, and instead of growing at all better waxed daily worse and worse, it pleased God to deliver them

them into the hands of their enemies, the Saracens first and the Turks afterwards, who turned their churches into mosques, their worship into horrid superstition, and instead of the pure religion of Jesus which they had thus abused, forced Mahometism upon them by arms and violence; and in this miserable condition they have continued ever since, sad monuments of God's justice, and terrible examples to all succeeding generations!

Such was the fate of the most glorious churches in the East, and let us beware lest such also be not the fate of the best and purest churches in the West. For these admonitions of the Apostle were intended for us as well as for them, and he repeats it again and again, *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches*; and leaves it to us to make the proper applica-

tion to ourselves. Now certainly we have enjoy'd the light of the gospel as well as they, in its truest splendor and purity; and like them have fallen from our former piety and virtue. Like them too we are threaten'd with the heaviest of God's judgments, the loss of our pure religion and liberty, and this speedily too, unless we take the same course that was prescribed to them, to prevent it. *Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.* Here are then two things proposed to our consideration, first the evils with which we are threaten'd, *I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place;* and secondly the most effectual method to prevent these evils, namely to *remember*

member from whence we are fallen, and repent, and do the first works.

I. First, the evils with which we are threaten'd are no less than the loss of all that is dear and valuable to us, both as Men and Englishmen, and as Christians and Protestants. For we are now engag'd in war with two of the most powerful princes in Europe, and it is not a fair and generous war that they carry on against us, but they have fomented a most unnatural rebellion among us, in order to impose a popish and abjur'd Pretender upon the throne of these kingdoms. And if Providence for the punishment of our sins should suffer our enemies to prevail over us, one of the first things that we must expect is to be deprived of the free exercise of our holy religion, and to be compelled into the Romish communion. *Our candlestick will then indeed be re-*

moved out of his place; we shall no longer be blessed with the pure light of the gospel, but shall be condemned to the darkness of superstition; our bibles we must exchange for vain legends and traditions, our excellent liturgy for prayers in an unknown tongue; and instead of worshipping God in spirit and in truth, we must bow down to images, and worship departed saints and angels. All freedom of debate and controversy will then be taken away. Examine and prove and profess the truth you must not; that church requires implicit obedience, and allows of no toleration; and you must either conform, or submit to go to the stake, or to the galleys, or to prison, or be forced to fly your native country. But it may be thought that the milder kind of popery may be established here as in France; but popery in any shape is terrible, and
 bad

bad is the best, as appears by the cruelties exercised towards the protestants of that kingdom in the last reign, and very lately in the present. Ask any of our French protestants or their children, and they will tell you the blessings of French popery as well as of French government. But is it not much more probable, that a native of Italy, a pupil and pensioner of the Pope, from principle, from gratitude, from interest devoted to the court of Rome, will endeavor to fix and establish popery among us in the fulness of its authority? It is sometimes indeed suggested in his commendation (and strange kind of commendation it is) that he is a person of no religion; but he is the fitter therefore to be made a bigot and the tool of bigots; and none so likely to persecute, plunder, and murder the professors of the true religion, as an infidel or an atheist. England
has

has been long consider'd as a sheep gone astray, and must by all means be fetched back to the fold, and be well fleeced to make amends for so many years as she hath been lost. They therefore who have any religion, must pray against this monstrous rebellion, as they would preserve their religion in any purity; and they who have no religion, must yet wish against it, as they would not be ridden by priests, nor be liable to ecclesiastical censures. They are too apt to say, that all religions are the same; but they would soon find and feel a very sensible difference. They would not then be suffered to neglect the service of a false church, as they do now of the true; but must be obliged to go frequently to mass and to confession. They murmur that the revenues of the church are so large; and what then will they say to the immense wealth of the Romish clergy, and

and their impositions and exactions for private masses, for prayers for the dead, for pardons and indulgences, for offerings to the saints, and numberless other inventions? They cannot bear even the moderate powers and privileges of the bishops and clergy of the church of England; and how then will they submit to the tyranny and dominion of the Romish hierarchy, the church's infallibility, the Pope's supremacy, penances, ecclesiastical commissions, and perhaps an office of Inquisition? They may then complain of Priestcraft indeed, and will feel *the little finger* of popery to be heavier than *the loins* of the church of England. 1 Kings
xii. 10.

But if we were more indifferent than I hope we are about religion, yet what is to become of our *property*? which is a consideration that may affect those, whom perhaps the other would not. All the lands belonging
to

to churches and abbeyes will in all probability be resumed: all public securities too will be cancell'd, as being given by a government that will then be deemed a lawless usurpation: they likewise who have obtained any royal grants, or purchased any of the forfeited estates will be forc'd to restore them to the former proprietors: all which things will beget infinite disorder and confusion; and as they will be a great blow to some even of the noblest families, so they must intirely ruin thousands of others who have no other means of subsistence. And all who have distinguish'd themselves in the service of their country and by their attachment to the present royal family will be sure to pay dearly for it, and will not be permitted to buy their peace but at an extravagant price. Nay the whole nation will lie at the mercy of the conqueror, and may be considered as a nation of rebels,

bels, and be drained and exhausted accordingly. And indeed otherwise how can he be able to recompense that starving and hungry crew, the followers of his fortunes? As their merits will be great if they succeed in placing him upon the throne of these kingdoms, so their rewards must be great in proportion; nor indeed is it a little thing that will satisfy the cravings of indigence and ambition, but like Pharaoh's lean kine they will eat up all the plump and well-favor'd ones. And immense debts will likewise be owing to foreign courts for so many years subsistence, and for the wars which they will charge as enter'd into upon his account, and for the aids and assistances which they have afforded him in this present expedition, so that we must not only endure the curse of being enslav'd, but must also be obliged to pay them for enslaving us.

And

And our *trade* and *commerce* will be in as precarious and wretched a condition as our property. For as our king will be the creature of France and Spain, and owe both his crown and the continuance of it to their aid and assistance, he must make ample concessions to them in return, and either out of gratitude or out of necessity sacrifice every thing to them that they shall require. And consequently those most valuable acquisitions, which we have made in this and former wars, will be tamely given up into their hands; the sovereignty of the seas will be lost; our commerce will be limited and restrain'd, their's will be enlarg'd and indulg'd; and as fast as foreign commodities flow in, the little wealth remaining in the nation will be drawn out, till in time we shall become like Tyre, the renowned city which was strong in the sea, she and her inhabitants, which caused

caused their terror to be on all that haunt it, but at last was made like the top of a rock, a place to spread nets upon, the habitation only of poor fishermen.

Ezek.
xxvi. 14.

And to the loss of our pure religion, the loss of our property, the loss of our trade, will yet be added, to complete our misery, the loss of our *excellent constitution* and *English liberty*. For the Pretender to his Majesty's crown can never succeed here but by conquest, or under the notion of divine hereditary indefeasible right. We suppose that he would choose the latter, but divine hereditary indefeasible right infers the most absolute uncontrollable dominion in the prince, and the most unconditional passive obedience in the people. For if he has an unalienable and indefeasible right to govern, his right will be still the same, whether he govern like a king or like a tyrant; and what reason have

have we to think that he will not govern like a tyrant, and the worst of tyrants? We might as well set a wolf to guard the fold, as an Italian papist to protect the liberties of English protestants. The princes, from whom he pretends to derive his claim, were no such friends to liberty, as to make us fond of seeing their race upon the throne again; they were bred up with high notions of their divine right, and during their reigns there was a continual struggle between the prerogatives of the crown and the privileges of the people: And can this man have learned juster notions of government in Italy? or is religion to be fetched from Rome, or liberty from France or Spain? It must be by war and violence, and with much effusion of blood, that he must ascend the throne, for God forbid that we should ever submit tamely to his government; and as he must attain to power by
force,

force, so by force he must support himself in it, and consequently strengthen himself with foreign aids, maintain large standing armies, and establish a military government. This would infallibly be the case; and our chains would sit heavier, and we should be more deeply afflicted with our slavery, for the full and perfect enjoyment that we have had of liberty. For it is certain that England never enjoyed so many years together of ease and liberty as since the happy Revolution. I do not except even the glorious days of queen Elizabeth, of which perhaps it may truly be said, that it is better to read of them than to have lived in them. We have enjoy'd our liberties to such a degree, that we have abused them even to licentiousness. And the worst enemy of the present government cannot charge his Majesty with attempting to in-

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fringe

fringe them in any single instance. The law hath been the constant and invariable rule of his Majesty's government, and if it had been as much the measure of his people's obedience, we should still have continued the happiest nation upon earth. No government indeed can ever be administer'd intirely to every body's satisfaction. Some persons are never to be satisfied; and there will always be defects and failings in the best of governments, as well as in the best of men: but as he is the best man who hath the fewest vices, so that is the happiest government, which is attended with the fewest evils and inconveniences. But what good have we to hope, or rather what evil have we not to fear in a change of government? A man must be destitute of common understanding, who is capable of believing that a protestant church can flourish

flourish in the reign of a bigotted papist, or if you will of a profess'd infidel; or that civil liberty can be secure under the government of one trained up in the maxims and politics of the most arbitrary courts in Europe. All the benefits and advantages obtained by the Revolution will be forfeited and lost by another revolution. And then, when true religion and liberty are extinct in Britain, where shall we find them or seek them upon earth? and who would not therefore perish rather in their defence, than survive their fall? who would not rather die a protestant and a free-man, than live an idolater and a slave?

II. These are the evils with which we are threaten'd, and we are to consider in the next place the most effectual method to prevent them. We have as high an opinion as any man can entertain, of his Majesty's

heroic spirit and resolution, of the wisdom and integrity of his councils, and particularly of the great council before whom I stand, of the courage and conduct of his generals, and of the strength and bravery of his troops inspir'd with the activity and ardor of their young and darling royal leader: but yet human means alone will not be sufficient, we must likewise implore the divine blessing upon them, and pursue the method recommended by the Apostle, namely, to *remember from whence we are fallen, and repent and do the first works.*

When any calamity befalls a nation, we should look farther than the immediate causes, and consider it as proceeding originally from the hand of God. *Shall there be evil in*
 Amos iii. *a city, and the Lord hath not done*
 6. *it?* And it is the gracious intent and purpose of Almighty God, not willingly

willingly to grieve and afflict the children of men, but by his judgments to awaken them to a sense of their guilt and of their duty, and so bring them to repentance before the measure of their iniquities be full. And when national calamities produce national repentance, and a people turn away from the evil of their doings, the Lord will turn away from his fierce anger, and will abundantly pardon, and instead of destroying resettle them in peace and tranquillity. There are frequent declarations to this purpose in scripture, and we see them most remarkably exemplified in the case of the Ninevites. The prophet Jonah was sent unto them with this message from God, *Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown*, and it had the proper effect upon them. *So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sack-*

Jon. iii.
4. &c.

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cloth;

cloth; from the greatest of them even to the least of them. And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way, and God repented of the evil that he had said that he would do unto them, and he did it not. Oh! let us then remember from whence we are fallen, how much we are degenerated from our former piety and virtue, and repent and do the first works, and thereby retrieve the antient honor and dignity of the nation. The wisdom of the government and legislature may certainly contribute most to a national reformation by inforcing old laws, by inacting new ones, and settling things upon a right and solid foundation; and they no doubt will act in a manner worthy of themselves and of their high station at this dangerous conjuncture: but still every body may contribute something, every body may reform some, may reform one
at

at least, and not add to the sinfulness of his sins by bringing distress and ruin upon his country. This is not a time to *speake smooth things*; it behoves us to deal freely with ourselves, and to consider seriously and impartially what are those national vices, which may have been the principal occasions of the present national calamities, and of which the reformation therefore ought to be more speedy, as it is more necessary.

And one of the most melancholy symptoms in our case is the *great decay of public virtue and love of our country*. Self-love is now the prevailing passion, and every thing almost is turned to private emolument and advantage. Public spirit is become ridiculous; it hath been so often pretended, where it was not, that it would scarcely be credited, where it really was: and love of our

country at best is only a popular topic of discourse; it is like music upon the tongue, but seldom sinketh into the heart. If we had any true love and affection for our country, should we be so fond of every thing foreign, and encourage French manufactures and French commodities to the prejudice of our own, and thereby contribute to the furnishing of our worst enemies with the sinews of war against ourselves? or would so many act in open defiance of all law and justice, and defraud the public revenue for the sake of their own private gain, carry on an illicit trade, and not only convey our treasure, but (what is even worse) intelligence to our enemies? or would so many of our fellow-subjects have taken part in this unnatural rebellion, and have joined in league with our most cruel and inveterate enemies to transfer the seat
of

of war into our own island? It was not this spirit that inspired our ancestors in the fields of Cressy and Agincourt, and enabled our two glorious queens to humble the pride of Spain and France in two of their greatest kings. It was not this spirit that animated the old Romans, and raised their country to the height of glory and of empire. And to the commendation of our enemies the French be it spoken, that they are actuated by a different spirit; they love and honor their king and country; prefer every thing of their own, and despise every thing foreign in comparison: and as we are fond of imitating their manners and fashions, it would be well if we would imitate them in the most laudable part of their character. This would be gaining a complete victory indeed over our enemies, and would be a more fatal blow to them, and

a greater check to their conquests than the most fortunate campaign. Love of our country is our duty, not only as Englishmen but as Christians. Our Saviour himself wept over his country at a distant view of the calamities which were to befall it. And St. Paul expresses such ardent affection for his countrymen, that he could even wish that himself were accursed from Christ, for his brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh. O pray then for the peace of our Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. For my brethren and companions sakes I will now say Peace be within thee; Yea for the sake of true religion, because of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek thy good.

Luk. xix.
41.

Rom. ix.
3.

Psal. cxii.
6, &c.

Another thing that requires immediate repentance and reformation
is

is the *luxury* and *dissoluteness* of the age. The old English plainness and integrity are in a manner lost among us; the prodigality and love of pleasure, which reigned in high life, have now descended into low life, and infected all ranks and degrees of men; and hence so much idleness and drunkenness in our streets, and such universal corruption of manners, and violation of all order and government. And what can be the necessary consequences of these things, but ruin and devastation? The Assyrian and Persian empires; the Carthaginian and Grecian commonwealths; and Rome herself, the nurse of heroes, and empress of the world; all fell by the luxury of their own subjects more than by the arms of foreign nations; they could not have been so easily conquer'd and led captive by their enemies, if they had not been first subdued and in-
flav'd

flav'd by their vices. And will not the same causes naturally produce the same effects? Such vices are ruinous at all times, but are more particularly destructive in times of war, when especially the advice of Moses to the Israelites ought to be religiously observed by every nation, *When the host goeth forth against thine enemies, then keep thee from every wicked thing.*

Deut.
xxiii. 9.

It is high time too to repent of our *factions* and *divisions*, and unite all as one man against the common enemy. Our situation as an island is such, and our country withal so well-peopled, that if we were firmly united among ourselves, we should have little to fear from any power, or indeed all the powers in Europe: but of late we have been rent and torn into so many parties and factions, as no doubt have given great encouragement to our enemies, and
made

made them imagine that we were more divided than in truth we are, or than the event hath prov'd. For England never testified greater loyalty and unanimity, and we hope that neither will her sister Scotland be wanting in gratitude, and obedience, and zeal to chastise her impious rebel sons. Our common danger ought to unite us, if nothing else can: and without doubt several who might otherwise be desperate enough to be in the interest of the Pretender, yet as Britons cannot be for the Pretender brought in by France, who can never intend to give us a king, but to reduce us to a province, and constitute a viceroy over us; and others who before were wavering in their inclinations, I make no question this rebellion hath fixed in loyalty, when they see by what horrid means and instruments a change must be accomplish'd, and
that

that instead of being govern'd as
 Est. iv. 11. they have been by a golden scepter,
 Psal. ii. 9. they must be ruled with a rod of
 Rev. ii. 27. iron, and broken in pieces like a pot-
 ter's vessel. The members of the
 church of England and protestant
 dissenters now plainly perceive, that
 they have one common interest, as
 they have one common danger; and
 we trust will unite as brethren not
 only upon the present, but upon all
 future occasions for the publick good,
 and watch and guard against popery,
 which would equally destroy them
 both. All will unite and cooperate
 with us, but the worst of papists,
 and foreign papists, who are like so
 many vipers in our bosom, and give
 secret intelligence to our enemies,
 and upon any favorable opportunity
 would throw off the mask, and de-
 clare against us. Our country hath
 been called the country of factions
 and parties; but now faction be
 dead,

dead, and party revive no more; and
 (as the voice of authority once said)
 “let there be no other distinction
 “heard of amongst us for the fu-
 “ture, but of those who are for the
 “protestant religion and the present
 “establishment, and of those who
 “mean a popish prince and a French
 “government.”

Above all we should lament and
 bewail our many heinous *offences to-*
wards God, which have brought
 down these heavy judgments upon
 us, and will bring still heavier, ex-
 cept we repent. Seriousness and zeal
 in religion used formerly to be one of
 the distinguishing characters of the
 English nation, but now we are as
 remarkable for an affected levity and
 indifference. How has perjury of
 late years multiplied and increased
 among us! what dreadful oaths and
 curses are daily heard in our streets!
 what heresies and blasphemies have
 been

been vented from the press! what a spirit of infidelity hath prevailed and been propagated in the nation! what open ridicule of the most solemn offices in the liturgy, and of the word of God itself! what profanation of the sabbath! what disregard of the sacraments! what utter neglect of private and family prayer, and indeed of all public worship and religion! Hath any nation, even of the corrupt and idolatrous church of

Jer. ii. 11. Rome, used *their Gods* so, *who yet are no gods?* We are, too many of us, like them in our manner of celebrating the latter part of the Lord's day, but we do not like them religiously observe the former part, that is we have all their vices, but none of their devotion. And was there ever an instance of a nation despising God and religion, who were not despised in their turn, and trampled under foot of their enemies?

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And would it not be a just judgment of God, since we have made ourselves so very unworthy of the protestant religion; to deprive us of it, *that we should believe a lie, who* ^{2 Thess. ii. 11, 12.} *believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness?* Oh! let us then humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, repent truly of our sins, and return unto the Lord in righteousness, and he will return unto us in mercy, and save us from all our enemies. When the power of Spain was in its meridian glory, and our enemies ready to devour us were hovering about our coasts with a fleet that was called *invincible*, how did we then cry unto the Lord, and make our humble supplications unto our God, and he heard our prayer, and blew with his wind, and dispersed or destroyed them all! And when we were again in danger of sinking under the

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weight of popery and arbitrary power, what zeal did we then testify for our holy religion! how were our churches crowded! how were prayers and sermons attended! how religiously did we observe our solemn fasts! how frequently and devoutly did we receive the blessed sacrament! and the Lord raised up for us a glorious deliverer, and after him a succession of protestant princes, who have been the felicity of our times, and may their posterity be so to latest generations! And *bath* God now forgotten to be gracious? or rather have not we forgotten to make our prayers unto him? We have certainly more to fear from our own impiety and irreligion, than from the arms of all our enemies. Let us make our peace with God, and he will be our shield and our salvation. Very applicable to the present occasion are the words of the prophet Joel,

Psal.
lxxvii. 9.

Joel, and with them I will conclude. *Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly; Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, say, Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them. Then will the Lord be jealous for his land and pity his people; Yea, the Lord will answer and say unto his people, Behold, I will no more make you a reproach among the heathen; but I will remove far off from you the northern army, and will drive him into a land barren and desolate; and ye shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, who hath dealt wondrously with you.*

Joel ii.
15, &c.

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I see I

And with them I will call
Blow the trumpet in Zion
Proclaim a fast, call a solemn assembly
Let the priests, the ministers of
the Lord, say, Spare the people, O
Lord, and give not thine heritage to
reproach, that the heathen should say
over them. Then will the Lord be
seeking for his hand and pity his peo-
ple; for the Lord will answer, and
say unto his people, Hallel, I will in-
crease you a reproach among the
heathen; but I will remove far off
from you the northern army, and
will drive him into land barren and
desolate; and he shall say in glory,
and be satisfied with the name
of the Lord your God, who said that
I would say with you.



F. N. I. 2

